

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 /091 W
-----120847Z 046764 /12

R 111241Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3934
INFO AMCONSUL DJIBOUTI
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY SANA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ADDIS ABABA 2954

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ET, FT, PFOR
SUBJ: EPMG AND INDEPENDENT DJIBOUTI

REF: ADDIS ABABA 2866

SUMMARY: MENGISTU STATEMENT IN MOSCOW ON DJIBOUTI HAS
PROMPTED CONSIDERABLE COMMENT IN ETHIOPIAN MEDIA. HIGH
RANKING MOFA OFFICIAL'S COMMENTS COPULED WITH MEDIA
STATEMENTS INDICATE EPMG CONCERN OVER GSDR IRRIDENTIST
CLAIMS STILL HIGH, WHILE EPMG CONCERN OVER POTENTIAL ROLE
MODERATE ARABS IN DJIBOUTI HAS RISEN SHARPLY SINCE
SURFACING OF "RED SEA SECURITY" SCHEME. IN REACTION TO
ABSENCE OF UNI AND MPL POLITICAL ROLE IN NEW GOVT,
EPMG EMHPASIZING THAT IT EXPECTS "EVEN-HANDED" TREATMENT
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OF DJIBOUTI'S AFARS FROM NEW GOVT. END SUMMARY.

1. PMAC CHAIRMAN MENGISTU'S STATEMENT IN MOSCOW NOTING
HISTORICAL, CULTURAL, BLOOD AND ECONOMIC TIES BETWEEN
ETHIOPIA AND DJIBOUTI AND HIS EXPRESSION OF HOPE THAT
DJIBOUTI "WILL MAKE NECSSSARY CONTRIBUTION TO CAUSE
OF PEACE AND SECURITY OF RED SEA REGION" HAS BEEN

SOURCE OF CONSIDERABLE COMMENT IN ETHIOPIAN MEDIA. EMBOFFS RAISED MENGISTU STATEMENT WITH ACTING MOFA DIRECTOR FOR AFRICAN AFFAIRS KASSATE BADIMA MAY 9. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION IF MENGISTU STATEMENT REPRESENTED WARNING TO NEW DJIBOUTI GOVT NOT TO BECOME INVOLVED IN RED SEA SECURITY SCHEMES, KASSATE REPLIED AFFIRMATIVELY. WHEN ASKED WHAT ROLE MODERATE ARABS COULD PLAY IN DJIBOUTI, KASSATE EVADED DIRECT REPLY BUT LEFT CLEAR IMPRESSION THAT THE LESS MODERATE ARABS DID IN DJIBOUTI, THE HAPPIER EPMG WOULD BE.

2. ETHIOPIAN MEDIA HAS DUNNED ARAB MODERATES RECENTLY FOR ATTEMPTS TO CONTROL RED SEA BY ASSISTING ERITREAN SECESSIONISTS AND ATTEMPTING TO "LURE" NEW DJIBOUTI GOVT INTO RED SEA SECURITY SCHEME. MEDIA STATED EPMG CLOSELY FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENTS IN DJIBOUTI BECAUSE ETHIOPIA'S VITAL INTERESTS AT STAKE. ANY TAMPERING WITH ETHIOPIA'S EXTERNAL NATIONAL INTERESTS BY IMPERIALISTS AND REACTIONARY ARAB CIRCLES TANTAMOUNT "TO TAMPERING WITH ETHIOPIAN REVOLUTION AND LIVELIHOOD OF BROAD MASSES." COMMENTING ON "BACKDOOR" INVITATIONS TO DJIBOUTI TO JOIN ARAB LEAGUE, MEDIA NOTED ARABS PROMISE PETRODOLLAR RICHES THROUGH SUCH REACTIONARY ORGANIZATIONS TO REPLACE ECONOMIC TIES WITH ETHIOPIA AND TO HINDER PASSAGE OF ETHIOPIAN GOODS THROUGH DJIBOUTI'S PORT.

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3. WITH RESPECT TO GSDR, EMBOFFS ASKED KASSATE IF EPMG FELT MORE RELAXED AS RESULT RECENT GSDR ACTIONS VIS-A-VIS DJIBOUTI. KASSATE EMPHATICALLY REPLIED NO, STATING EPMG STILL SERIOUSLY CONCERNED OVER POSSIBILITY OF SOMALI TAKEOVER.

4. ETHIOPIAN MEDIA, WHICH STILL SOFT-PEDALLING ETHIO-SOMALI RELATIONS, HAVE INDIRECTLY ATTACKED GSDR OVER DJIBOUTI. MEDIA NOTED "PRESSURES FROM QUARTERS THAT HAVE MADE NO SECRET OF THEIR INTENTION TO ANNEX TERRITORY." THERE ARE ALSO REFERENCES TO "PSEUDO-MARXIST" REGIMES IN AREA WHO ACT AS AGENTS OF ARAB INTERESTS AND WHO, THROUGH STRAW POLITICAL PARTIES SUCH AS FLCS, HAVE SINISTER MOTIVE OF INDIRECTLY CONTROLLING INTERESTS AND NATIONAL ASPIRATIONS OF DJIBOUTI PEOPLE.

5. WITH RESPECT RECENT ELECTIONS AND REFERENDUM, KASSATE INDICATED EPMG WOULD HAVE PREFERRED THAT

CANDIDATES HAD BEEN SELECTED ON BASIS OF ALL PARTY REPRESENTATION, RATHER THAN SIMPLE NATIONALITY. WHEN EMBOFFS INDICATED ACTUAL SLATE MOST LIKELY GAVE AFARS GREATER NUMBER OF SEATS THAN THEY COULD HAVE EXPECTED TO WIN IN ELECTION AND GAVE EVIDENCE OF FRENCH ATTEMPT AT EVEN-HANDEDNESS, KASSATE EXPRESSED EPMG CONCERN THAT MPL AND UNI AFARS HAD BEEN EFFECTIVELY CUT OUT OF ACTIVE POLITICAL ROLE IN NEW GOVT. KASSATE NOTED SOME AFARS (READ MPL AND UNI SUPPORTERS) HAD VOTED FOR INDEPENDENCE, BUT HAD NOT VOTED FOR RPI SLATE, THUS DEMONSTRATING NEW GOVT NOT REPRESENTATIVE OF ALL POLITICAL ELEMENTS IN TERRITORY.

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6. MEDIA COVERAGE OF RESULTS OF REFERENDUM LIMITED. MAY 10 ETHIOPIAN HERALD HAD OBSCURE PAGE THREE ITEM REPORTING OUTCOME. MEDIA HAVE ALSO REPORTED FITIGU TADESSE, EPMG CONGEN IN DJIBOUTI, CONVEYED CONGRATULATIONS ON BEHALF OF EPMG TO HASSAN GOULED IMMEDIATELY AFTER REFERENDUM RESULTS ANNOUNCED. PERHAPS MORE DISTURBING IN MEDIA IS STATEMENT IN ONE

ARTICLE THAT FUTURE DJIBOUTI GOVT CAN HAVE
PEACE AND PROGRESS ONLY WHEN VARIOUS NATIONALITIES
WITHIN ITS TERRITORY HAVE "EQUAL" PARTICIPATION IN
POLITICAL, SOCIAL, AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS OF SOCIETY.
ARTICLE EXPRESSED EPMG'S "WISH AND DESIRE" DJIBOUTI
WILL FOLLOW PRINCIPLE IN ETHIOPIAN PROGRAM OF NATIONAL
DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION WHICH ADDRESSES NATIONALITY
PROBLEM. PRINCIPLE STATES "UNITY" OF ETHIOPIAN
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NATIONALITIES WILL BE BASED ON COMMON STRUGGLE
AGAINST FEUDALISM, BUREAUCRATIC CAPITALISMS, IMPERIALISM,
AND REACTIONARY FORCES AND ON MUTUAL COLLABORATION,
BROTHERHOOD AND GOODWILL IN ORDER TO BUILD NEW LIFE."

7. ASKED WHY EPMG HAD NOT BEEN MORE FORTHCOMING WITH
DJIBOUTI POLITICIANS PRIOR TO INDEPENDENCE, KASSATE
STATED EPMG HAD "GOOD" RELATIONS WITH HASSAN GOULED
AND HAD TALKED WITH ABDALLAH KAMIL ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS.
HE INTIMATED EPMG HAD NOT INVITED EITHER TO ADDIS SINCE
GOULED VISIT LAST SUMMER, BECAUSE OF KAMIL'S
ILLEGITIMATE ASSUMPTION OF PREMIERSHIP AND BECAUSE IT
COULD HAVE BEEN COUNTERPRODUCTIVE. (COMMENT: THIS
VIEW DOES NOT SQUARE WITH THAT EXPRESSED BY HASSAN
GOULED TO EMBOFF IN DECEMBER.)

8. COMMENT: PREVIOUSLY EXPRESSED DESIRE BY DJIBOUTI'S
NEW LEADERSHIP TO JOIN ARAB LEAGUE, TO MAINTAIN
"EVEN HANDED" TIES WITH ETHIOPIA AND SOMALIA, TO
RETAIN CLOSE TIES WITH FRANCE AND WEST, AND TO SEEK
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM MODERATE ARABS WILL DO
NOTHING TO PLACATE EPMG'S FEARS OVER ARAB/IMPERIALIST
"CONSPIRACY" TO CONTROL DJIBOUTI AND THUS ONE OF
EPMG'S ACCESSES TO SEA. OVER PAST YEAR, EPMG HAS
BEEN BADLY OUTMANEUVERED BY GSDR, GOF AND DJIBOUTI
POLITICIANS. MORE RECENTLY, EPMG HAS ALSO ALLOWED
IDEOLOGICAL INTERESTS TO FLAVOR ITS DJIBOUTI POLICY
TO DETRIMENT OF ETHIOPIAN NATIONAL INTERESTS. THIS
HAS RESULTED IN MINIMUM NUMBER PRO-ETHIOPIAN POLITI-
CIANS IN NEW GOVT, AND IS DIRECT OUTCOME OF
EPMG'S UNWILLINGNESS TO RECOGNIZE POLITICAL REALITIES
IN DJIBOUTI AND THE HORN. WHILE EPMG'S FUTURE COURSE
IS NOT CLEAR, STATEMENTS TO EFFECT THAT DJIBOUTI
SHOULD SOLVE ITS NATIONALITY PROBLEM BY USING
ETHIOPIAN MODEL INDICATE EPMG MAY CONCENTRATE FUTURE
EFFORTS ON "RADICALIZING" DJIBOUTI POPULATION, POSSIBLY
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THROUGH MPL. EPMG LEADERSHIP NO DOUBT FEELS ONLY
LONG-TERM SOLUTION TO DJIBOUTI PROBLEM IS DJIBOUTI'S
ADOPTION OF PROGRESSIVE SOCIALIST IDEOLOGY SUPPORTIVE
OF EPMG GOALS, DESIRES, AND NATIONAL INTERESTS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, FOREIGN RELATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 11-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977ADDIS02954
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770167-0410
Format: TEL
From: ADDIS ABABA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770572/aaaackdd.tel
Line Count: 231
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 1bf74497-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 ADDIS ABABA 2866
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2576980
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EPMG AND INDEPENDENT DJIBOUTI
TAGS: PFOR, SOPN, ET, FT, (MENGISTU HAILE MARIAM)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/1bf74497-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009